



## The Future of Hardware Ranch

### *Public invited to review and comment on management plan*

In 1945, the State of Utah purchased Hardware Ranch and turned it into a Wildlife Management Area (WMA). Today, the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (DWR) oversees the 14,000-acre ranch, which provides critical big game winter range for deer, moose and elk. Other areas of focus include habitat restoration, wildlife research and public outreach.

Because the ranch is an important part of the Cache Valley community and draws visitors from across the state, the DWR is seeking public comment on the management issues that face this popular area.

#### **What management issues does Hardware Ranch face?**

The DWR has drafted a management plan to identify the mission of Hardware Ranch and to outline the public activities compatible with that mission. The working draft of the plan addresses the following multiple-use issues and activities:

- OHV use and misuse
- Formal elk feeding
- Winter tourism
- Dispersed camping and access management
- Hunting, fishing and wildlife watching
- Education and outreach programs
- Habitat restoration
- Prescriptive grazing practices
- Local history and folklore



*Family outings — including fishing trips — are a big part of traditional activities at Hardware Ranch. Unfortunately, some areas have been damaged and need to be restored.*



*Hardware Ranch provides great access to prime hunting areas.*

### How can the public get involved?

Members of the public can see a draft of the management plan and comment on it at [www.hardware ranch.com](http://www.hardware ranch.com).

In the coming months, after comments have been gathered and the draft is complete, the DWR will hold a series of open houses to meet with the public and any interested organizations. By opening this public dialogue, the DWR hopes to receive constructive comments on the multiple-use issues that face Hardware Ranch and on the proposed strategies for tackling those issues.



*Fencing, access management and dispersed camping are important topics in the plan that relate to habitat protection. The buck-and-rail fence above was built to protect trout streams on the Hardware Ranch WMA.*

### What has the DWR accomplished and what are its future plans?

To date, the DWR has taken some important steps to improve wildlife habitat in this popular area:

- Reconstructing corrals to protect Curtis Creek from livestock waste
- Adding fencing to protect riparian plants near Curtis Creek
- Beginning an intensive grazing effort to remove fire hazards and to invigorate brush growth that provides critical winter food for big game animals

In 2009, the DWR will be fencing Rock Creek (north of the Baxter/Sawmill Road) to protect the riparian area from further misuse and to allow it to repair. These projects and other strategies outlined in the management plan will help ensure a productive future for Hardware Ranch Wildlife Management Area.

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